



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Los Angeles Region



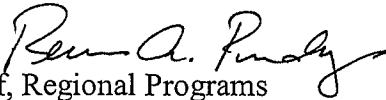
Linda S. Adams
Agency Secretary

Recipient of the 2001 *Environmental Leadership Award* from Keep California Beautiful

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

TO: Interested Stakeholders

FROM: Renee Purdy 
Section Chief, Regional Programs

DATE: February 18, 2010

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)
SCOPING MEETING, MARCH 23, 2010 TO ESTABLISH THE TOTAL
MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) FOR MARINE DEBRIS IN
NEARSHORE/OFFSHORE SANTA MONICA BAY

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) staff is in the process of developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for marine debris for nearshore and offshore Santa Monica Bay.

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 21083.9, as amended by AB 1532, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) section 21080.5, Regional Board staff will conduct a CEQA scoping meeting to receive comments on the appropriate scope and content of the "functionally equivalent" substitute environmental documents supporting Basin Plan Amendments that would establish the new Marine Debris TMDL and implementation plan. The substitute environmental documents will be prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.5, and the State Water Resources Control Board's regulations related to its Certified Regulatory Program (see 23 Cal. Code Regs. §3775 et seq.). The substitute environmental documents are intended to serve as planning level (Tier 1) environmental documents, consistent with Public Resources Code Section 21159.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Nearshore and Offshore Santa Monica Bay have been listed on California's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list as water quality impaired due to the presence of debris. A Consent Decree signed between the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Santa Monica Baykeeper, and Heal the Bay also requires a TMDL to be developed according to the 303(d) list. During storm events, trash is washed into storm drains, creeks, and lakes, and is deposited on banks, beaches, or in the ocean. In addition to trash, the presence of plastic pellets in the marine environment has become a significant environmental problem. Plastic pellets have been found in storm drains, on beaches, and in the ocean. Together, trash and plastic pellets contribute to the severe and recurring problem of marine debris. It has been demonstrated that marine debris impairs the beneficial uses of waters of the State in the Los Angeles Region, specifically in nearshore and offshore Santa Monica Bay. The Santa Monica Bay Marine Debris TMDL will

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identify sources and assign loading allocations that, when implemented, will achieve water quality standards that will protect beneficial uses such as wildlife habitat and recreation.

WATERSHED BACKGROUND

The Santa Monica Bay is an integral part of the larger geographic region commonly known as the Southern California Bight. It is bordered offshore by the Santa Monica Basin, to the north by the rocky headlands of Point Dume and to the south by the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and onshore by the Los Angeles Coastal Plain and the Santa Monica Mountains. The 414 square mile area of land that drains naturally to the Bay, known as the Santa Monica Bay Watershed, is bordered on the north by the Santa Monica Mountains from the Ventura-Los Angeles County line to Griffith Park, extending south and west across the Los Angeles coastal plain to include the area east of Ballona Creek and north of Baldwin Hills. South of Ballona Creek, a narrow coastal strip between Playa del Rey and the Palos Verdes Peninsula forms the southern boundary of the watershed.

The impairment of nearshore and offshore Santa Monica Bay includes trash and plastic pellets, which together make up marine debris. The marine debris problem ranges widely depending on the environment and public accessibility to the Bay, its beaches, and waterways leading to the Bay. In general, there is much more trash on the roadside where Pacific Coast Highway closely parallels the coast. Trash has been observed at all of the Bay's beaches, however trash problems seem to be more significant at the beaches with the heaviest traffic and highest visitation.

Common items found at all of the beaches during site visits included: plastic bags and candy wrappers, cigarette butts, styrofoam, beverage containers, straws, and paper. In addition to trash, studies show a large presence of plastic pellets in storm drains, on beaches, and in the ocean. The plastic pellets are very small in size, but are plentiful in the environment, as they are too small to get caught in current structural best management practices.

SCOPE OF TMDL

In addition to including four required TMDL sections (problem statement, numeric target, source analysis, and wasteload and load allocations) the proposed Santa Monica Bay Marine Debris TMDL will coordinate with other municipal, County, and State programs and may:

- Assign wasteload allocations of zero trash discharge to MS4 permittees;
- Assign load allocations of zero trash discharge to nonpoint sources;
- Assign load allocations of zero discharge to plastic pellet manufacturers and carriers;
- Be implemented through phased annual reductions in trash and plastic pellet discharges;
- Allow for compliance with the TMDL based upon installation, operation and maintenance of technology that has been certified by the Executive Officer of the Regional Board as a "Full Capture Device," or alternative Best Management Practices with known measurable performance approved by the Executive Officer of the Regional Board.



SUBSTITUTE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

Regional Board staff has not proposed any specific perspectives for "substitute" environmental documents yet, but will consider any reasonable suggestion that may be appropriate to avoid or mitigate significant or potentially significant adverse environmental effects.

Interested stakeholders are specifically requested to provide information about:

- How they or responsible jurisdictions would foreseeably comply with the Marine Debris TMDL;
- The reasonably foreseeable significant environmental impacts associated with those means of compliance;
- Specific evidence supporting that such impacts are reasonably foreseeable, and describing the magnitude (significance) of the impacts;
- Reasonable alternative means of compliance that would have less significant adverse environmental impacts;
- Reasonable mitigation measures that would minimize any unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the means of compliance.

(See Public Resources Code section 21159.)

The CEQA Scoping Meeting for the Santa Monica Bay Marine Debris TMDL will be held at:

**10:00 AM, March 23, 2010
Hyperion Treatment Plant
12000 Vista Del Mar
TSF Conference Room 116
Playa del Rey, CA 90293**

Please be aware that for access and security purposes the following information will be needed. If you plan on attending, provide the following information to Stefanie Hada shada@waterboards.ca.gov or (213) 576-6804 by Thursday, March 11, 2010 (include special accommodations, if needed):

1. Name
2. City Department or Company Name
3. Personal Vehicle Information (make, model, and license number)

Please contact Stefanie Hada at (213) 576-6804 if you have any questions about this matter. Please bring the foregoing to the attention of any persons known to you who would be interested in this matter.

cc: Michael Levy, Office of Chief Counsel, State Water Resources Control Board

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